ProtectUK

The Threat from Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism

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Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT) describes those involved in Extreme Right-Wing activity who use violence in furtherance of their ideology. These ideologies can be broadly characterised as Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism and White Supremacism.

Headline Assessment

Since 2016, the UK has proscribed five Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT) groups, all of whom hold a White Supremacist ideology. The primary threat from these groups is their ability to radicalise and inspire Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs).

The threat from ERWT in the UK has evolved with several attacks and plots since 2017. Any future ERWT attack in the UK is highly likely to be carried out by S-ITs.

Those in the UK can be radicalised by Right-Wing Extremists based overseas.

What is Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism?

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT) describes those involved in Extreme Right-Wing activity who

use violence in furtherance of their ideology.

Those engaged in this activity do not represent a cohesive body, rather a fragmented movement made up of groups and individuals with a range of ideologies.

These can be broadly characterised as follows:

- **Cultural Nationalism** - a belief that ‘Western Culture’ is under threat from mass migration into Europe and from a lack of integration by certain ethnic and cultural groups. The ideology tends to focus on the rejection of cultural practices such as the wearing of the burqa, or the perceived rise of the use of sharia law. In the UK this has been closely associated with anti-Islam groups.
- **White Nationalism** - a belief that mass migration from the ‘non-white’ world, and demographic change, poses an existential threat to the ‘White Race’ and ‘Western Culture’. Advocates for some sort of ‘White’ homeland, either through partition of already existing countries, or by the repatriation of ethnic minorities, by way of force if necessary.
- **White Supremacism** - a belief that the ‘White Race’ has certain inalienable physical and mental characteristics that makes it superior (with some variation) to other races. Often associated with conspiracy theories that explain the decline in ‘white’ political and social status over the last hundred years. This can also encapsulate a belief in the spiritual superiority of the ‘White Race’, often describing racial differences in quasi-religious terms (such as the ‘Aryan soul’).

However, it is important to note that individuals and groups may subscribe to ideological tenets and ideas from more than one category.

Additionally, there is a significant amount of Extreme Right-Wing activity that, although sometimes violent, does not meet the terrorism threshold. An example of this includes provocative and confrontational protests that result in violence directed against persons and/or property.

Are there any proscribed ERWT groups in the UK and what threat do they pose?

Since 2016 the UK has proscribed five ERWT groups, all of whom hold a White Supremacist ideology.

These groups are:

- **National Action (NA)** – The first right-wing extremist group to be banned in the UK under the

Terrorism Act. NS131, Scottish Dawn and System Resistance Network are also proscribed as being aliases of National Action. The group's official Twitter account celebrated the murder of the MP Jo in 2016 by a White-Supremacist. The group is racist, antisemitic and homophobic. Its ideology promotes the idea that Britain will inevitably see a violent 'race war', which the group claims it will be an active part of.

- **Sonnenkrieg Division** – Proscribed in February 2020, Sonnenkrieg Division is a White Supremacist group, formed in March 2018 as a splinter group of System Resistance Network (an alias of NA). Members of the group were convicted of encouraging terrorism and possession of documents useful to a terrorist in June 2019. The group has encouraged and glorified acts of terrorism via its posts and images online.
- **Feuerkrieg Division** – Proscribed in July 2020, Feuerkrieg Division (FKD) is a White Supremacist group founded in late 2018 that has an international footprint, with members across North America and Europe. The group advocates White Supremacist ideology, which is promoted in a collection of essays that advocate the use of violence and mass murder in pursuit of an apocalyptic race war.
- **Atomwaffen Division (AWD)** – Proscribed in April 2021, AWD is a predominately US-based White Supremacist group that was active between 2015 and 2020. AWD advocates the use of violence in order to bring about a fascist, white ethno-state by initiating the collapse of modern society by means of a 'race war'. This ideology has become known as 'accelerationism'.
- **The Base** – Proscribed in July 2021, The Base is another predominantly US-based militant white supremacist group, formed in 2018. Like AWD, it espouses an 'accelerationist' ideology.

The primary threat from these groups is their ability to radicalise and inspire Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs).

How does the wider threat from ERWT manifest in the UK?

In recent years, the threat from ERWT in the UK has evolved and grown. Since 2017, several plots motivated by an extreme right-wing ideology have been disrupted in the UK. Over the same period, three ERWT attacks have occurred in the UK:

- In 2017, a 47-year old male drove a vehicle into a crowd of worshippers outside a London mosque. As a result, one man struck by the vehicle died and a further ten were injured.
- In 2019, a day after an ERWT attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, a man was stabbed by a White Supremacist in Stanwell, Surrey.
- In 2022, a 66-year old man from High Wycombe carried out an attack using fire on an immigration centre in Dover. Two members of staff at the centre received minor injuries.

In every case, these plots and attacks have been carried out by a Self-Initiated Terrorist (S-IT) inspired by ERWT ideology. Any future ERWT attack in the UK is highly likely to be carried out by S-ITs.

What is the threat from overseas ERWT groups?

Due to the lack of an internationally agreed definition for terrorism, and the various ways different jurisdictions classify incidents of politically-motivated violence, it is difficult to obtain reliable data on ERWT activity overseas. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence of ERWT activity in many countries in the West.

By far the most activity has been seen in the United States (US). Between 1994 and 2020, 57% of nearly 900 terrorist plots and attacks in the US were perpetrated by ERW terrorists, although it is not clear how many incidents would be classified as terrorism in the UK. Some of the most influential ERWT propaganda (such as ‘accelerationism’) has come from the US, much of which has its roots in fascism and national socialism. This propaganda has almost certainly influenced individuals and groups in the UK.

In Europe, Germany has consistently experienced more ERWT attacks and plots since 2015 than any of its European neighbours. This coincides with a significant increase in the influx of refugees into the country, some of whom have been targeted by those with an extreme right-wing ideology.

- In June 2019, Walter Lübcke, a member of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s centre-right party, was gunned down by a 45-year-old right-wing extremist who was angry about Lübcke’s pro-refugee stance.
- In October 2019, a man attempted to storm a synagogue in Halle, Germany, armed with guns and a head camera that streamed a video of the attack on the gaming website Twitch. He killed two people and injured two others, vowing in a manifesto to “kill as many anti-Whites as possible”.
- In February 2020, a 43-year-old man shot and killed nine people at two separate shisha bars in Hanau, Germany, having published a 24-page manifesto that outlined his plans for global ethnic cleansing.

Another study (in The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), The Right-wing Terrorism Threat in Europe, Mar 2020) has found that other European countries have experienced high levels of ERWT attacks per capita: Denmark, France, Greece, Norway and Sweden. It also notes that a large proportion of right-wing attacks targeted refugees or locations associated with Islam.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, a white supremacist killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019. His manifesto argued that mass immigration will lead to the complete racial and cultural replacement of the European people.

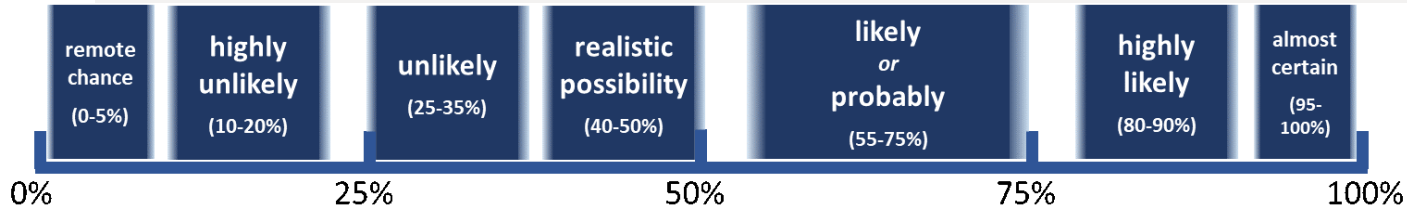
Extreme Right-Wing individuals and groups have long been very well connected internationally. However, advances in technology have deepened these connections. The role of the internet in the sharing of ideas and disseminating propaganda amongst the Extreme Right-Wing global community cannot be underestimated. Social media platforms have been widely used by ERW terrorists for this purpose. In this way, those in the UK can be radicalised by extremists based overseas.

Probability and Likelihood in Intelligence assessments

When describing threats in intelligence assessments, Counter Terrorism Policing utilises the Probabilistic Yardstick.

The Probabilistic Yardstick is a tool created by the Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis (PHIA), in the UK government, to standardise the way in which we describe probability in intelligence assessments. For example, if we use the term 'likely' what we mean is 'a 55-75% chance'.

Use the scale below as a reference when reading ProtectUK Insights.



KEYWORDS

RISK
THREAT
TERRORIST THREAT
ERWT
RIGHT-WING
TERRORISM
GROUPS
EXTREME
EXTREME RIGHT-WING
THREAT FROM
EXTREME RIGHT-WING TERRORISM
MTA
RADICALISATION

PAGE CATEGORY
THREAT ANALYSIS